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*Dramatic Publishing*

# Honus & Me



by  
**Steven  
Dietz**

Based on the book by  
**Dan Gutman**

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“Honus Wagner hit over .300 for 17 consecutive seasons in the National League.”

—*Baseball Almanac*

“I don’t make speeches. I just let my bat speak for me in the summertime.” —*The Wisdom of Old-Time Baseball*

## Honus & Me

**Adventure/Comedy.** By Steven Dietz. Based on the book by Dan Gutman. Cast: 6 to 12m. (doubling possible), 2 to 4w. (doubling possible). Extras as desired. *Honus & Me* is a theatrical and entertaining baseball-card adventure about 10-year-old Joey Stoshack, the worst hitter on his Little League team. One day Joey finds the most valuable baseball card in the world: the Honus Wagner T-26 printed in 1909. To his surprise, this card works like a time machine, taking him back to Wagner’s era and placing him smack dab in the midst of the 1909 World Series. Joey’s adventure with Honus restores his confidence as a ballplayer—but, more importantly, it teaches him the true value of being a teammate and a friend. “*Honus & Me* is a perfect baseball-themed outing for fathers and their kids.” (*Windy City Times*) “It’s a perfect combination: a kid who doesn’t believe in himself, a worthy hero and a good, old-fashioned baseball story. These elements come together to make an entire audience cheer for the ‘little guy.’” (*Stage and Cinema*) Flexible staging with small units as needed. Approximate running time: 80 minutes. Code: HF8.

Cover design: Susan Carle. John Peter “Honus” Wagner, shortstop, Pittsburgh, National League. ca. 1911. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA. Bain Collection.

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# Honus & Me

Adventure/Comedy by

STEVEN DIETZ

Adapted from the book by

DAN GUTMAN



**Dramatic Publishing Company**

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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(HONUS & ME)

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All producers of the play must give credit to Steven Dietz as the dramatizer of the play and Dan Gutman as the author of the book in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The names of Steven Dietz and Dan Gutman must also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and must appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type shall read as follows:

### *Honus & Me*

Adapted from the book by Dan Gutman.

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In addition, all producers of the play must include the following acknowledgment on the title page of all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and on all advertising and promotional materials:

“*Honus & Me* was first commissioned and produced by the  
Seattle Children’s Theatre.”

*Honus & Me* received its world premiere at Seattle Children's Theatre on March 31, 2006.

*Cast*

Joey Stoshack.....Gabriel Baron  
Mom..... Morgan Rowe  
Dad..... Peter Crook  
Honus Wagner ..... David Drummond  
Ty Cobb ..... Troy Fischnaller  
Birdie/Ensemble..... Timothy Hyland  
Coach/Ensemble ..... Charles Leggett  
Mrs. Young..... Marianne Owen  
Understudies ..... Galen Joseph Osier and Amy Thone

*Production Staff*

Director ..... Steven Dietz  
Assistant Director..... Tess Branson  
Set Designer ..... Craig Wollam,  
Costume Designer ..... Jeannette deJong  
Light Designer ..... Rick Paulsen  
Sound Designer ..... Chris R. Walker

For my dad, Johnnie Dietz



“When I was a boy growing up in Kansas, a friend of mine and I talked about what we wanted to be when we grew up. I told him I wanted to be a real major league baseball player, a genuine professional like Honus Wagner. My friend said that he’d like to be president of the United States. Neither of us got our wish.”

—*Dwight D. Eisenhower*

# Honus & Me

## CHARACTERS

*(6m., 2w., doubling as indicated)*

JOEY STOSHACK: a 10-year-old boy.

MOM / FIRST LADY FAN

DAD / AUCTIONEER / FRIENDLY FAN

MISS YOUNG / SECOND LADY FAN

BIRDIE / BLUEBIRDS TEAMMATE / PIRATES TEAMMATE /  
RAVENS PITCHER / TIGERS PITCHER

HONUS WAGNER / SILHOUETTE FIGURE

HAWKS PITCHER / CHUCK / TY COBB / RAVENS CATCHER

COACH / MR. MENDOZA / SPORTSWRITER / HECKLER

OTHERS:

BLUEBIRDS TEAM

HAWKS TEAM / HAWKS TEAMMATE 1 – 2

VOICE OF UMPIRE

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

SINGING BOSTON FANS

RAVENS TEAM

## CHARACTER NOTES

MOM: wears a jacket over the uniform of a registered nurse.

DAD: dressed casually, wearing a Pittsburgh Pirates baseball cap.

COACH: wears a baseball cap and a whistle.

BIRDIE: attire is part-jock, part-biker, part-bouncer. He wears a huge jeweled wrestler belt around his waist.

CHUCK: an odd, laconic, slightly menacing teenager.

MR. MENDOZA: wears a suit.

RAVENS TEAM: their baseball caps are black and their black jerseys have sweatshirt-type hoods, which they wear over their caps in grim-reaper fashion.

## NOTE ON CASTING

The role of Joey is intended to be played by an adult actor.

## TIME AND PLACE

The present. And 1909. Pittsburgh.

## SETTING

An open playing space that will depict a variety of locales. The central arena for the play is that of a baseball diamond, which should only be suggested, not depicted in a realistic manner. Other small units include:

LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL FIELDS

MISS YOUNG'S YARD

MISS YOUNG'S ATTIC: a small area with an eccentric collection of odds and ends such as rusty birdcages, broken chairs, old lamps, vintage suitcases, bundled papers and boxes.

BIRDIE'S HOME RUN HEAVEN SHOP: A glass case filled with baseball memorabilia serves as the counter. A small cash register or cash box sits atop it.

A LIBRARY

JOEY'S ROOM: a small bed and a nightstand. On the nightstand is a small lamp and a modern, digital clock.

JOEY'S FRONT YARD

A HOTEL ROOM

BENNETT PARK: the former ballpark in Detroit.

## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

Despite the popular notion that Honus Wagner's first name rhymed with "bonus," his biographers and the National Baseball Hall of Fame have established that it is pronounced "Hawn-ess", a variation of "Hans."

Stoshack is pronounced "Stow-shack."

"Stosh" is pronounced to rhyme with gosh.

## NOTE ON UPDATING

The year mentioned in the text (2006), as well as the names of contemporary ball players, may be updated as needed.

# Honus & Me

## ACT I

AT RISE: *Music plays and, from various directions, the CAST enters. They are seen in silhouette against the blue sky. They take their positions facing upstage and, removing their caps, as though gazing at a distant, unseen flag.*

*Furthest downstage is JOEY STOSHACK, facing front. After a moment, his DAD taps JOEY on the shoulder, reminding him to remove his cap. JOEY does. He turns and faces upstage like the others.*

*A moment of stillness and expectation as the music reaches a crescendo. Then the VOICE OF UMPIRE calls out "Play ball!" Lights shift to reveal a little league baseball field.*

*JOEY is isolated in light downstage in the batter's box, facing the audience. His uniform says "BLUEBIRDS." He speaks to the audience between pitches.*

*The HAWKS PITCHER is behind JOEY on a raised mound facing offstage L, to where he'll pitch.*

*The BLUEBIRDS TEAM and the HAWKS TEAM might occupy benches to either side of the stage, or their voices can be heard as a recording.*

JOEY. OK. It makes no sense. Let me tell you that right away. It makes no sense at all. But, still, the thing is—

*(The pitch comes in. JOEY takes it. The sound of a ball a hitting mitt.)*

VOICE OF UMPIRE. Strrrieeeeeeeeeeek!

JOEY (*prepares for the next pitch*). See, there's this thing—this thing that happens whenever I hold a baseball card in my hands. It's happened since the first time I ever touched one. My hands, well, my hands start to ... *tingle*. And if it's a really *old* card, well ... my whole body starts to tingle. (*Beat.*) See, I told you it makes no sense.

*(Another pitch comes in. JOEY takes it. The sound of a ball hitting mitt.)*

VOICE OF UMPIRE. Strrrreeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeke!

JOEY (*steps out of the box, speaking to the unseen UMPIRE*).

Time out! (*To audience.*) It's kind of like static electricity shooting through me. Like all of a sudden I have this ... power. This *magical power*. But, on the baseball field—

HAWKS TEAM. Sto-shack, Sto-shack—

JOEY. I don't have these powers.

HAWKS TEAM.—he's a no-hack! (*Laughter.*)

JOEY. I'm an OK player, but under pressure—I freeze up.

HAWKS TEAMMATE 1. Hey No-Hack—could your ears be any bigger?!

HAWKS TEAMMATE 2. It looks like your head is growing wings!

HAWKS TEAMMATE 1. He looks like Dumbo!

VOICE OF UMPIRE. Batter up!

HAWKS TEAM. BATTER UP, DUMBO!

*(More laughter as JOEY's COACH appears, in the middle of a cell phone call.)*

JOEY. Whenever I look back to my coach, he just says something like—

COACH (*looks up, briefly*). Remember, Joey, even a blind squirrel can sometimes find a nut!

JOEY. It's not encouraging. (*Steps into the batter's box.*)

HAWK TEAM (*chanting*). STRIKE HIM OUT! STRIKE HIM OUT! STRIKE HIM OUT!

JOEY. See, we're down by one run in the bottom of the sixth—and I'm our last chance. Two outs. Two strikes. I've already struck out *three times* this game, and the only thing worse than the other team making fun of me is the sound of the guys on my team *packing up our equipment* 'cause they know it's over.

BLUEBIRD TEAMMATE. We're *hungry*, Joey. Just swing and *get it over with*.

(*The pitch comes in. JOEY swings and misses, badly. The sound of a ball hitting a mitt, as before.*)

VOICE OF UMPIRE. Strriike threeee! Youuu'rree ooouuuuutt!

(*Cheers and groans from the respective teams.*)

COACH (*walking past JOEY*). Hey, Stoshack—how's your handwriting?

JOEY. My what?

COACH. I'm thinkin' you might make *oneheckuva good scorekeeper*. (*Into cell phone.*) Yeah, four times—he's the Strikeout King, that kid.

(*COACH goes, as the HAWKS PITCHER approaches.*)

HAWKS PITCHER. Nice try, No-Hack.

JOEY. It's *Stoshack*.

HAWKS PITCHER. Yeah, whatever. Don't worry about it. Seriously. (*Puts a consoling arm around JOEY's shoulder.*) I didn't used to be able to hit, either.

JOEY. Really?

HAWKS PITCHER. Yeah.

JOEY. Then what happened?

HAWKS PITCHER. My mommy changed my diaper and everything was fine!

*(The HAWKS PITCHER shoves JOEY down and runs off, laughing with the HAWKS TEAM as JOEY's DAD appears. He hands JOEY his mitt.)*

DAD. It's OK, Joe. Don't listen to these jokers.

JOEY. Hi, Dad.

DAD. You'll get 'em next time. I just know it.

JOEY *(glum)*. Thanks.

*(JOEY's MOM appears opposite, holding JOEY's backpack.)*

JOEY *(cont'd)*. Hi, Mom.

MOM. You're not the only one who struck out, Joey.

JOEY. But I was the *last* one. I'm always the last one.

*(Silence. JOEY is waiting for his MOM and DAD to say something, anything, to each other. They don't.)*

JOEY *(cont'd)*. Mom, I'd like you to meet Dad. Dad, this is Mom.

MOM.

DAD.

Very funny—

Look, Joey—

JOEY. Would it, like, *kill you* to say something to each other?

*(More silence.)*

JOEY *(cont'd)*. OK. Forget it.

DAD *(to MOM)*. I thought we might go get some pizza.

MOM. Not tonight, Tom.

DAD. Oh, come on—

MOM. He has homework.

DAD. What's it going to hurt, Beth? We won't be late.

MOM. See, this is the thing—

MOM (*cont'd*). DAD.

This is the thing you *do*. Can we please not do this, OK?

MOM (*cont'd*). When I *call you*, when I try to make some *plans* for the two of you—

DAD. Forget it.

MOM.—some night when it would help me out, because I'm working *sixty-some hours a week*—

DAD. I said *forget it*.

MOM.—but, on *those nights* when I really need you, where are you then?!

DAD. It's *pizza*. I'm not taking him *across the country*—I'm talking about PIZZA. I'm talking about spending one hour with my son!

(*This lands. She stares at him.*)

MOM. Ask him, then. It's his decision.

(*Beat.*)

DAD. Whaddya say, Joe? Want to grab a slice down at Angelo's?

JOEY. Mom—

MOM. You're old enough to make this decision on your own, Joey. It's up to you.

(*Silence.*)

JOEY. Sure.

DAD. Great.

JOEY. But can we—

DAD. Anything.

JOEY.—can we *all go*? All three of us?

(*DAD gives MOM a long look.*)



DAD (*quietly*). I don't think so, Joe.

(*Pause.*)

JOEY. Then ... maybe another time, OK?

(*Pause.*)

DAD. OK.

JOEY. Thanks for coming, Dad.

DAD. Hey, you did great. (*Takes JOEY's bat and demonstrates.*) Remember what we talked about. Keep your knees bent, your head down and your hands just a little bit apart—like this ...

JOEY (*eager to learn*). What does that do?

DAD. Gives you a little more bat speed.

JOEY. OK. Thanks.

DAD. Hey—did you get any new baseball cards?

JOEY. I've got my eye on a David Eckstein rookie card—and maybe an Omar Vizquel.

DAD. You love those shortstops.

JOEY. That's my position, you know that. Even though I usually just ride the bench.

DAD (*warmly*). Come here.

(*DAD gives JOEY a hug.*)

DAD (*cont'd*). I'll see you Friday.

(*MOM mouths the words "thank you" to DAD. DAD goes.*)

MOM. You OK?

JOEY (*regarding the backpack*). You bring snacks?

MOM. Yep.

JOEY. Then I'm OK.

*(JOEY sits near his MOM. He opens his backpack and munches on a snack during the following:)*

JOEY *(cont'd)*. You got off early.

MOM. I traded with Vicki.

JOEY. Why do you do that?

MOM. I wanted to see your game.

JOEY. Yeah, and then you'll have to work a *double shift* tomorrow and you'll be exhausted and your feet will hurt and you'll say, "When I win the lottery, I'm never setting foot inside that hospital again!"

*(MOM laughs, enjoying this.)*

JOEY *(cont'd)*. It's not funny.

MOM *(mock serious)*. No, not funny.

JOEY. Mom—

MOM. It's serious. Very, very serious.

JOEY. Stop it.

MOM. The first thing I'll do with my lottery money is buy you some new shoes.

JOEY. I like these shoes.

MOM. I can see your socks.

JOEY. It's just a little hole—

MOM *(repeating)*. *I can see your socks, Joey.*

JOEY. —and it's nothing to worry about because I filled it with a baseball card. Look. *(Removes his shoe, from which he then removes a baseball card.)* It works perfect. *(Hands the card to MOM.)*

MOM *(regarding the card)*. *Larvell Blanks?*

JOEY. Utility infielder. Nine seasons. Two-fifty-three average. Twenty home runs. His nickname was "Sugar Bear."

MOM. Never heard of him.

JOEY (*taking the card back*). Me neither, but he keeps my feet dry. So when you *do* win the lottery, you can buy me a whole bunch of new baseball cards and get us a great big house with a yard for *my new dog* and lots of rooms—

MOM (*dry*). With a *maid* to clean them.

JOEY. Yes, of course, and a big kitchen with a built-in TV for me and Dad to watch the ball games, one of those TV's that has a *split screen* so we can watch one game on *this side* and the other game—

MOM. Money doesn't solve everything, Joey.

JOEY. It would get you and Dad back together.

MOM. That's not true, honey—

JOEY. All those arguments, I heard them, you know, and at least HALF of them were about money—Dad losing a job, you working too much at the hospital ...

MOM. Joey, look—

JOEY (*sharp*). Mom, it's TRUE. (*Beat.*) You know it's true.

(*Pause.*)

MOM. It's not going to happen. So, let's not worry about it. OK? (*Stands, gathers their things.*) I got you a job to make a little spending money.

JOEY. What kind of job?

MOM. Miss Young on the corner. She needs her attic cleaned out. She'll pay you \$10.

JOEY. Mom, Miss Young is like a *hundred years old*.

MOM. Well, yes.

JOEY. Or *older*. I think she's even *older*. I think she'll never die. And you know why, Mom? She's a *witch*.

MOM. Joey—

JOEY. Ask anyone! Old Miss Young is a witch who rides around on a broomstick.

MOM. She does not ride around on—

JOEY. What do you want to bet that when I go over there she's holding a BROOM?! And I bet her house is filled with the bodies of kids who went there to clean out her attic! (*Scary sound.*) Whawhahwhahwhwhahwhwhahwhwhaa!!!

MOM (*starts to leave*). C'mon, kiddo, you've got homework to do.

JOEY (*scooping up and flinging imaginary grounders*). I'm not your kiddo. I'm Jeter! I'm Jimmy Rollins! I'm Miguel Tejada! (*Lights isolate him. To audience.*) Miss Young lives at the end of our street, in an old dark house with peeling paint—and big trees that scrape against the walls when it's windy. And it's *always windy* at that house.

(*MISS YOUNG's yard. MISS YOUNG appears, holding a broom. Nearby is an old garbage can.*)

MISS YOUNG. Joey Stoshack, you're shootin' up like a weed. (*Beat.*) What? You've never seen a *broom* before?

JOEY. Uh, yeah, sure.

MISS YOUNG. Your mom told you I had \$10 for you, huh?

JOEY. Well, she said—

MISS YOUNG (*overlapping*). Better in your pocket than in mine. I got no use for money. But you, you could buy yourself some new shoes.

JOEY. I *like* these shoes.

MISS YOUNG. Maybe you'll see some up in the attic. Anything you want up there, Joey—*take it*. I just want it gone.

JOEY. OK.

MISS YOUNG. Still playing ball?

JOEY. Yeah.

MISS YOUNG. Who's your team? The Pirates?

JOEY. No. My dad's a Pirates fan, but I kind of like the Red Sox—

MISS YOUNG. Oh, Joey, *don't do that*—

JOEY. And the Cubs—

MISS YOUNG. Oh, *stop right there*—

JOEY. And the Mariners.

(*Beat.*)

MISS YOUNG. The who?

JOEY. The Mariners. Seattle. *Seattle, Washington?*

MISS YOUNG. They have a team way out there?

JOEY (*she must be kidding*). Yeah, sure.

MISS YOUNG. That's still Indian country, isn't it?

JOEY. Well, *no*, Seattle's a pretty big—

MISS YOUNG. Well, good for them. You know, there's two kinds of people in this world: people who like baseball and people who *will* like baseball when they stop being *idiots*. My papa took me to my first game, right here in Pittsburgh at Exposition Park. In those days, the team was called the *Alleghenys*, named after the river. But the next year they stole away a second baseman from the Athletics, who were mad as heck about it, and took to calling the Pittsburgh team a bunch of "pirates." The name stuck.

JOEY. I never knew that.

MISS YOUNG. Oh, I was a just a little girl, but I still remember those player's names: Ducky Hemp and Doggie Miller, Phenomenal Smith and Peek-A-Boo Veach. (*Off JOEY's look.*) You don't believe me?

JOEY. Well—

MISS YOUNG (*sharp*). *Look 'em up*—you'll see. Heck, it was a manager of the Pirates who invented those flip-up sunglasses that the players wear.

JOEY. Really?

MISS YOUNG. Fred Clarke. He's in the Hall of Fame. And you've heard of Forbes Field?